REMARKS

Claims 22, 28 and 36-42 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 2, 3, 6-9 and 11 have been amended to better claim the invention. Claims 31 and 32 have been amended to depend from claim 1 (these claims are drawn to specific embodiments of the system of claim 1), and new claims 43-46 have been presented.

Claim 1, as amended is supported by existing claim 1 and by the as-filed Specification, at page 11. Reference to the term "element" can be found in said paragraph and reference to said "first promoter" and said "second promoter" were added to improve the clarity of the claim, although this is implicit from the above-mentioned paragraph on page 11.

New claim 43 is drawn to a repressible system, and new claims 44 and 45 are drawn to stage-specific and tissue-specific expression systems. These amendments are supported by the as-filed specification where numerous mentions are made of “repression”, “repressible” or “repressed”; including at pages 4-5, 10 and 15-16, respectively.

None of the amendments made herein constitutes the addition of new matter.

The Requirement for Restriction

In response to the finality of the requirement for restriction, claims 22, 28 and 36-42 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to pursue this subject matter in a future application. Claims 31 and 32 were amended to depend from claim 1, and as specifically exemplified embodiments of the elected invention, examination in the current application is respectfully requested.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-4, 6-16, 18-21, 23-24 and 29-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly unpatentable over Heinrich et al. (2000) PNAS 97:8229-8232. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Heinrich is said to teach a tetracycline repressible female-specific lethal genetic system in *Drosophila melanogaster*. One component is the tetracycline-controlled transactivator gene under the control of the fat body and female-specific transcription enhancer from the yolk protein (*yp1*) gene. The other component consists of the proapoptotic gene hid under the control of a tetracycline-responsive element. Males and females of a strain carrying both components are viable on medium supplemented with tetracycline, but only males survive on normal medium. Heinrich is said to teach the expression of tTA controlled with the female and fat body specific transcription enhancer from the *yp1* gene. Heinrich is further said to teach the *yp1* enhancer upstream of the *hsp70* minimal promoter used to drive expression of the tTA coding sequence and that in the absence of tetracycline, tTA binds to *tetO* and induced expression of the proapoptotic gene *hid*. The loss of the fat body results, with female specific lethality, and because ectopic expression of the proapoptotic gene *hid* can lead to tTA, which is inactive in the presence of tetracycline, expression of tTA is controlled with the female specific enhancer of *yp1*. Heinrich is further said to teach because components of the system are either conserved (yolk protein genes) or known to function in both Drosophila and mammalian cells, the system could be used to make genetic sexing strains for a variety of insect pests. Heinrich is said to teach the system was designed such that female flies would die in the absence of tetracycline due to widespread cell death in the fat body, expression of tTA is controlled by the female and fat body specific *yp1* enhancer, binding of tTA to tetO results in inactivation of expression of the proapoptotic gene *hid* and induction of apoptosis in fat body results in female lethality because the fat body is an important tissue for metabolism and food storage in insects. The amount of induced cell death is said to be very sensitive to the level of ectopic *hid* expression which in the female lethal system depends directly on the level of tTA expression. It is said that position effects could be minimized b bracketing the *yp1*-tTA and tetO-*hid* constructs with insulator elements. Heinrich teaches the effect of diet on female lethality, consistent with prior studies that showed the *yp1* enhance is responsive to diet, especially yeast and that it would be of interest to determine whether the diet response is mediated by either the sex-

specific double sex protein or the proteins that bind the b-zip or we sites of the enhancer.

In the interest of advancing prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to specify a two component system with a positive control factor which controls expression of both components. By contrast, the two components of the Heinrich system are separately controlled – tTA by the *yp1* genetic sequences and the *hid* coding sequence is expressed on the regulatory control of tetracycline responsive genetic sequences (see Figure 1, for example).

In view of the foregoing distinction over Heinrich, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention is not anticipated by the cited Heinrich reference, and the withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-16, 18-21, 23-24 and 29-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Heinrich et al. (2000) PNAS 97:8229-8232 in view of Savakis (US 2003/0140007) and Loukeris (1995) PNAS 92:9485-9489 Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Heinrich is said to teach a tetracycline repressible female-specific lethal genetic system in Drosophila, as discussed in detail above.

Savakis is characterized as teaching, at the time of the present invention, the use of a modified transposon, wherein the modification includes removal or disruption of transposase sequences or the incorporation of heterologous coding sequence(s) and/or expression control sequences. The Patent Office acknowledges that Savakis teaches a particular transposon (Minos) to generate transgenic animals and says that Savakis embraces the idea of any transposon and contemplates sequences heterologous to the species. A variety of promoters were disclosed. Savakis is also said to contemplate modified codon usage.

Loukeris is said to teach that efforts for Drosophila germ line transformation are unsuccessful because P elements of *Drosophila melanogaster* do not function in *D. Hawaiensis*. Loukeris is said to teach an approach which is to use P elements from species distant to Drosophila.

In the interest of advancing prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to specify a two component system with a positive control factor which controls expression of both components. By contrast, the two components of the Heinrich system are separately controlled – tTA by the *yp1* genetic sequences and the *hid* coding sequence is expressed on the regulatory control of tetracycline responsive genetic sequences (see Figure 1, for example). Note that in certain claims, the regulation of gene expression is via the combination of a positive feedback loop and tissue specific or stage specific sequences.

Savakis does not suggest the system of the present invention as currently claimed, with a single regulatory factor controlling expression of both itself and a second component of the system. Different applications of genetic modifications are taught by Savakis and Loukeris.

In the interest of advancing prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to specific a two component system with a positive control factor which controls expression of both components of the system. This is not taught or suggested by the cited references, alone or in combination; it represents a very different strategy for regulated gene expression than is taught by the cited references, alone or in combination. This key feature does not appear to be found in the cited art. Thus, Applicants respectfully maintain that the invention as currently claimed is not taught or suggested by the prior art, and it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to construct a system where the same factor controls expression of both the regulatory factor and the second component of the system.

Moreover, please note that in the present claims, there are embodiments where the lethal gene and the regulatory factor are the same, for example tTA. The cited art does not suggest that this could be so, and with so much information in the field teaching the use of a gene heterologous to the regulatory sequences for lethality or sterility, it is clear that this is not where the art leads one of ordinary skill in the art in seeking a solution for this technical problem. It is by this self-action (autoregulation) that positive feedback in the insects is obtained in the present invention. However, the cited art lack this essential feature. Accordingly, the present inventors have established a new and nonobvious system which can be highly effective in a very wide range of insects. Thus, the present invention has considerable advantages over the prior art.

The Examiner is referred to the introduction of the present specification which states that "very few promoters or other control elements have been characterized and there remains a pressing need for such elements." This is, of course, in reference to insects. Therefore, the present inventors have established a novel system can be highly effective in insects, whereas it was not previously thought that this was possible. Indeed, our system is the equivalent to a reliable strong promoter which functions in a very wide range of insects. A single promoter with this level of expression efficacy was not previously available. Thus, the present invention has considerable advantages over the cited prior art.

Despite the evident need for such a system, there is no mention of a controllable, positive feedback element in the cited art or any instructions as to how the skilled person may obtain one. Thus, there is nothing in the prior art to motivate the skilled person to provide a system according to the present invention which comprises a positive feedback loop, as neither of these documents suggest why this might be useful, let alone how to provide it. In other words, the cited art, despite disclosing the tetracycline/tTA system, teach completely different pest control approaches to that of the present invention.

A further advantage of the present invention is that the complete expression

system can be introduced with only a single transformation event. This also means that insects homozygous for the system are homozygous at only one locus rather than two, which makes them easier to construct by breeding, and tends to reduce the fitness cost due to insertional mutagenesis.

Accordingly, not only does the present invention provide a promoter with a broad specificity throughout insects, but it also overcomes several problems that tend to occur with expression systems in the field, i.e. in actual insect populations. Thus, the present invention is not obvious over the cited art.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the discussion provided herein, the claims are not properly deemed obvious over the cited art and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 17 and 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Heinrich et al. (2000) PNAS 97:8229-8232 in view of Bessereau (2000 (WO 00/073510), Savakis et al. (EP 0955364), Horn et al. (2003). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Heinrich is said to teach a tetracycline repressible female-specific lethal genetic system in Drosophila, as discussed above, and the teachings of Savakis have been discussed above.

The cited Bessereau reference relates to genetic modifications in the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans*, especially using transposable elements to make transgenic nematode. There is no teaching of a two component genetic system with two components controlled by a single regulatory factor, as is now claimed.

The cited Savakis reference relates to transposons and their use in creating transgenic organisms, but it does not teach a two component genetic system with two components controlled by a single regulatory factor, as is now claimed.

Applicants have discussed the Heinrich, Savakis and Loukeris references above, and that discussion is applied here as well.

The cited Horn reference relates to genetic modification for embryo lethality in certain insect pests. Blastoderm specific promoters are used to control expression of the lethality sequences so as to achieve embryo-specific killing. There is no teaching or suggestion of a common regulatory factor to control the expression of both the regulatory factor and the lethality factor.

Applicants have discussed the Heinrich, Savakis and Loukeris references above, and that discussion is applied here as well.

Moreover, please note that in the present claims, there are embodiments where the lethal gene and the regulatory factor are the same, for example tTA. The cited art does not suggest that this could be so, and with so much information in the field teaching the use of a gene heterologous to the regulatory sequences for lethality or sterility, it is clear that this is not where the art leads one of ordinary skill in the art in seeking a solution for this technical problem. It is by this self-action (autoregulation) that positive feedback in the insects is obtained in the present invention. However, the cited art lack this essential feature. Accordingly, the present inventors have established a new and nonobvious system which can be highly effective in a very wide range of insects. Thus, the present invention has considerable advantages over the prior art.

Despite the evident need for such a system, there is no mention of a controllable, positive feedback element in the cited art or any instructions as to how the skilled person may obtain one. Thus, there is nothing in the prior art to motivate the skilled person to provide a system according to the present invention which comprises a positive feedback loop, as neither of these documents suggest why this might be useful, let alone how to provide it. In other words, the cited art, despite disclosing the tetracycline/tTA system, teach completely different pest control

approaches to that of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing and the amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully maintain that the invention is not prima facie obvious over the cited art, and the withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 33-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Heinrich et al. (2000) PNAS 97:8229-8232 in view of Horn et al. (2003) and Horn et al. (2000). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Patent Office has stated that the characterization of the Heinrich and Horn (2003) references are applied here as well and conceded that these two references do not teach an expression marker. The Horn (2000) reference is said to teach the use of the fluorescent marker for Drosophila transgenesis, and the Patent Office has concluded that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to use a marker to select transgenic organisms at difference stages of development with a reasonable probability of success.

As discussed above at length, the claims have been amended to specify the two component system with the expression product of one component controlling both its own expression levels and that of the second component. This is a significant departure from the strategies of the prior art. Note also that claim 1 (base for the vector of claim 33) does not specifically recite an expression marker. The present invention as claimed, with its particular expression system and regulatory strategy constitutes a significant departure from and advance over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing discussion and the amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully maintain hat the present invention as claimed is not obvious over the cited art and the rejection should be withdrawn.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this case is in condition for allowance, and passage to issuance is respectfully requested.

If there are any outstanding issues related to patentability or with respect to this response, the courtesy of a telephone interview is requested, and the Examiner is invited to call to arrange a mutually convenient time.

This response is accompanied by a Petition for Extension of Time (three months) and payment of $555.00 as required by 37 C.F.R. 1.17. Nine claims are cancelled in the present Amendment and four have been added. It is believed that this amendment does not necessitate the payment of any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16-1.17. If the amount submitted or the extension requested is incorrect, however, please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 07-1969.

Respectfully submitted,

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